## IDEAS AT Work

## COMPUTERS/HILLEL SEGAL

## Saving used equipment a waste of space, value

Almost every office has a closet or storeroom filled with obsolete computer equipment. When it was new, it may have cost thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars. Today, it sits unused, gathering

What should you do with it?
Unfortunately, the
market value for most old computer equipment is not very high. Not only does brand new equipment perform better, but every year the prices for new equipment drop even further. If outdated equipment is more than five years old, many people simply assume it's practically

worthless and don't even try to sell it. Thus, it gets stored — out of sight, out of mind. "Maybe I'll use it someday," is the common ration-

-alization.

If you think about it, however, simply putting old computer equip-ment in storage is counterproduc-tive. It depreciates even further, provides absolutely no present utility or value, and wastes space. As much as it might hurt one's pride to accept only a few hundred dollars for the equipment, it's probably better than nothing. The illusion that you'll use it again someday is probably just that - an

Here are three methods to use in

selling your old equipment:

Used computer stores. Most metropolitan areas have one or more used computer stores that will either buy your equipment out-right or accept it on consignment. Ask them how much they'll pay to simply take it off your hands. Three percent to 5 percent of the original price may still bring you several hundred dollars, even though it may hurt to accept such a small amount. If they sell it for you on consignment, expect to pay at least 30 percent of the sale price for their commission. Another disadvantage to consignment sales: It might sit in their store for six months or a year before being sold.

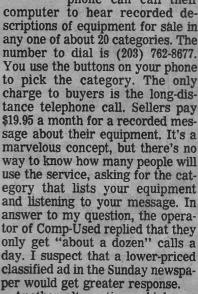
Classified advertising. The

classified section of almost every newspaper has a section for computer or electronic equipment. In

addition, many computer trade magazines have sections for used equipment ads. If you place an ad, you can usually get more than the store amount. It's wise to first visit a used computer store in any case, however, just to see what they say about the "book value" of the

equipment. This is frequently the fastest way to dispose of equip-ment, but a word of caution: Don't take personal checks.

Comp-Used telephone listing. A company called Comp-Used in ' Wilton, Conn., has a computer buyer-seller matching service. Anyone with a touch-tone phone can call their to hear recorded de-



Another alternative, which you may wish to discuss with your tax adviser, is to give the equipment to a charitable organization. In such case, the IRS allows you to deduct the "fair market value" of the equipment, as listed in books such as "The Brown Book," published by Brown Book Inc. of Oakland, Calif., or "Orion Blue Book" from Orion Research Corp. of Durango. The books usually can be viewed at used computer stores or libraries. used computer stores or libraries. In cases where the quoted amount is high and the likelihood of your finding a buyer quickly is small, this is a good way to proceed. In any case, do something! Any-

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thing you do will probably be better than letting the equipment sit in your company storeroom.



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